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*Wm E Dodge*

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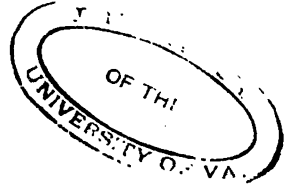
NEW YORK



# OLD NEW YORK.

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## A LECTURE.



BY

WILLIAM E<sup>d</sup> DODGE.

DELIVERED AT ASSOCIATION HALL, APRIL 27TH, 1880  
UPON THE INVITATION OF MERCHANTS AND  
OTHER CITIZENS OF NEW YORK.

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W. C. A. BRIDGE  
NEW YORK:  
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY,  
No. 755 BROADWAY.  
1880.

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*To the Honorable William E. Dodge.*

DEAR SIR:

The great changes in our city, during your long and active business career, are but little understood and almost forgotten. With the details of these changes during the last sixty years you are especially familiar. Many incidents and reminiscences are known to you which would be of great interest to us.

We learn with pleasure you have been induced to write out many of your recollections as a citizen and merchant during this eventful period. We beg you will name some evening at an early date when we can listen to a lecture from you upon the changes through which the New York of your boyhood has become the New York of to-day. We are, very truly,

Your friends and fellow-citizens,

E. D. MORGAN,	JAS. M. BROWN,
JOHN A. STEWART,	HOWARD POTTER,
H. C. POTTER,	ROYAL PHELPS,
SAM. D. BABCOCK,	F. S. WINSTON,
J. J. ASTOR,	A. A. LOW,
SAM. SLOAN,	H. B. CLAPLIN,
E. A. WASHBURN,	PETER COOPER,
W. H. VANDERBILT,	CHARLES H. RUSSELL,
HENRY HILTON,	W. WALTER PHELPS.

NEW YORK, April 17, 1880.

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NEW YORK, April 19, 1880.

*To Messrs. E. D. Morgan, John A. Stewart, J. J. Astor, Henry C. Potter, Sam. D. Babcock, and others.*

GENTLEMEN:

I beg to acknowledge your communication of the 17th inst., and in reply to your very kind request, it will afford me pleasure to meet you at the Association Hall, on Tuesday evening, the 27th inst., at 8 o'clock, and to deliver the lecture I have prepared on the New York of Fifty Years Ago. I am, gentlemen,

Very truly yours,

WM. E. DODGE.



## LECTURE ON OLD NEW YORK.

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IN preparing the lecture which I have been invited to deliver this evening, I have ventured to refer to many incidents which I thought might interest, and perhaps benefit, the young men, but which, I fear, will be far from interesting to many elderly gentlemen whom I see present, and to whom my recital of details already familiar to them may prove tedious.

Let me confess that the preparation of this address has tended to dispel the idea which I have loved to indulge, that while others might be growing old, I might still be classed among the middle-aged. This account of what I remember since I entered a store as a clerk, sixty-one years ago, doubtless will induce others to place me among that respectable class called OLD MEN, although I shall still try to feel that I have not yet joined its numbers.

I am to speak of my recollections of the New York of fifty to sixty years ago, and of some of the



changes which have marked this more than half a century.

Eighteen hundred and eighteen found me a boy in a wholesale dry-goods store, No. 304 Pearl street, near Peck slip. My employers were two most worthy Quakers. A promise made by my father to the junior partner, that when he went into business I was to be with him, will account for my leaving school so early.

It was a very different thing, in those days, to be a boy in a store from what it is now. I fear that many young men, anxious to get started, would hesitate long before facing such duties as had then to be performed. My father lived at that time at 98 William street, now the corner of Platt. William street was then the fashionable retail dry-goods centre; at No. 90, stood Peter Morton's large store, the fashionable family store of that day.

I had to go every morning to Vandewater street for the keys, as my employers must have them in case of fire in the night. There was much ambition among the young men as to who should have his store opened first, and I used to be up soon after light, walk to Vandewater street and then to the store very early. It was to be sprinkled with water, which I brought the evening before from the old pump at the corner of Peck slip and Pearl street, then carefully swept and dusted. Then came sprink-

ling the sidewalk and street, and sweeping to the centre a heap for the dirt-cart to remove. This done, one of the older clerks would come, and I would be permitted to go home for breakfast. In winter the wood was to be carried and piled in the cellar, fires were to be made, and lamps trimmed. I mention these particulars to show that junior clerks in those days did the work now done by the porters. There were comparatively very few carts used by the dry-goods dealers, most of the business being done by porters, with hand-carts and large wheelbarrows, who stood at the different corners ready to take or go for a load. Each had a heavy leather strap over the shoulders and a brass plate on the breast with his license number. Their charges for any distance below or above Chambers street were  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents and  $18\frac{1}{2}$  cents respectively. There were very few carts, and those of the old-fashioned two-wheel kind; such heavy two horse trucks, and large express and other wagons as now fill our business portions of the city, were unknown in those days.

The dry-goods auction-stores were mostly on the corners, and on the blocks from Wall to Pine streets. When our employer would purchase a lot of goods at auction, it was our business to go and compare them with the bill, and if two of us could carry them home we did so, as it would save the shilling por-

terage. I remember that while in this store I carried bundles of goods up Broadway to Greenwich village, near what are now Seventh and Eighth avenues and Fourth to Tenth streets, crossing the old Stone Bridge at Canal street. This had long square timbers on either side in place of railing, to prevent a fall into the sluggish stream—some fifteen feet below—which came from the low lands where Centre street and the Tombs now are. It was called the Colic, (though its true name was Collect, as it took the drainage of a large district), and was the great skating place in winter. Turning in at the left of the bridge I took a path through the meadows, often crossing on two timbers laid over the ditches where the tide ebbed and flowed from the East river. At that time there was no system of sewerage, but the water which fell was carried off by the gutters and by surface draining.

I remember well the old Fly Market, which commenced at Pearl street where Maiden lane crosses. There was a very large arched drain, over which the market was built, extending from Pearl street to the dock. It was so high that, in passing along Pearl on the south sidewalk, one had to ascend quite an elevation to get over the arch of the sewer. Maiden lane then was as narrow at Pearl street as Liberty is between William and its present junction with Maiden lane—only about fifteen feet wide. In the

winter, when the streets were running with the wash of melting snow and ice, the mouth of the sewer at Pearl street would often clog up, and then the water would set back as far as Gold street; the sidewalk being constructed some two feet above the roadway, to provide for the great flow of water that came down from Broadway, Nassau, William and Liberty streets. The boys used to get old boots, and, placing them on a pole, would make in the slush of snow and ice footprints all across Pearl street, as if persons had been passing, and then would run around the corners to see some poor stranger step into the trap and sink above his knees in water and slush.

They tell a story of a young lady who was coming down Pearl street, just as a heavy rain had filled the street back to Gold, and of a polite young sailor who saw her stand wondering how she could get over. He took her at once without asking, and, himself wading across, knee-deep, placed her on the other side all safe. She at once demanded what the impudent fellow meant, when he replied, "Hope no harm has been done!" and, catching her up again, placed her back on the other side.

At this time the wholesale dry-goods trade was confined almost entirely to Pearl street, from Coenties to Peck slips, though there were a few firms further up, and any party intending to commence that business must first be sure that he could

obtain a store in Pearl street. We now talk of what Wall street is doing; then, if one would speak of the dry-goods trade, he would say "things are active" (or "dull") "in Pearl street."

The retail trade was mostly in William street and Maiden lane, except three fashionable houses that were the Stewarts of that day. These were all in Broadway: Vandevoot, near Liberty street; "the Heights," near Dey street, and Jotham Smith, who occupied the site of the Astor House. Stewart did not commence until 1824. The cheap retail dry-goods stores were in upper Pearl and Chatham streets; the wholesale groceries were in Broad, Water, and Front streets. At this time the trade was mostly divided by sections, some selling almost entirely to the South, others to the North and West, and others doing what was called an Eastern and Long Island trade. The capital and business of one who was then termed a jobber were very different from what are now suggested by that term. A firm with \$15,000 to \$20,000 capital commanded good credit, and its annual sales seldom exceeded a few hundred thousand. I doubt if there were half a dozen persons who sold over a million each. Now we have many who sell that amount every month, and some of them over a million a week.

The styles of goods also have changed very much.

Then nearly all dry-goods were imported ; our calicoes or prints came in square hair-trunks, containing fifty pieces each ; very few goods came in boxes—they were either in trunks or bales. We had a few domestic cottons, but they were all woven by hand. Power-looms were not introduced till a few years after. Our common cottons were all from India, and called India “hum-hums ;” they had very strange names, such as “Bafturs,” “Gurros,” etc. Most of them were thin, sleazy goods, filled with a kind of starch to make them look heavy. At present, nearly all cotton goods sold are of American manufacture.

In nothing is the change greater than in the vast progress and extent of our manufactures. The wonderful improvement in machinery has enabled us to compete with other nations, and, through the protective system that has given encouragement to our infant efforts, we have now become, as a nation, not only able to provide for our own consumption, but to begin competition for the trade of other countries. But for this policy of protection to our own industries we should to-day have been simply a nation of producers from the soil, supplying other nations with raw material and food, while dependent on them for the various articles of consumption. My firm conviction is that, but for our tariff, our country would have never attained its present posi-

tion, and that we would hardly have known what we now call the West—with its vast extent, its cities and towns, and its ability to feed other nations. At the time of which I speak there was a very limited manufacture of iron, with the exception of a few charcoal forges for making small bars, horseshoes, axes, hammers, etc. All our iron and hardware were imported. Now, by the aid of mineral coals, we have become (under our protective system) one of the largest producers of iron, in all its variety of uses, in the world; and the discoveries of different qualities of ores, in vast quantities, in almost every State of the Union, and the unlimited supply of anthracite and bituminous coal, have given an impetus to our iron manufacture which will soon place us ahead of all other countries. The perfection of our manufacture of most kinds of hardware, copper, tin, brass, and even of the finer branches of watches, clocks and jewelry, cabinet and wood-work, and patent agricultural implements, is now attracting the admiration of the world.

Our cloths and cassimeres were all imported. Large quantities of silks from France and Italy, and beautiful crapes and satins for ladies' wear, were brought from India and China. Business was periodical; we had our spring and fall trade. You will remember there were but few steamboats, and

no railroads, and it was quite an event for the country merchants to visit the city. They generally came twice a year—spring and fall; those from the North and East by the Sound or North river, in sloops or schooners, often a week on their passage; those from the South and West by stage-coaches. It is very difficult to realize what it was to come from Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, and Missouri, when the most of the long journey was by stage-riding night and day; and even from our Southern States it was a tedious trip to some point on the coast, where the vessel might make the long journey less trying. There were lines of ships and schooners running between Norfolk, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, and Mobile, but these trips were often very long and the accommodations poor.

Over the stores in Pearl street were a large number of boarding-houses expressly for country merchants; here they would remain a week or ten days, picking up a variety of goods, for most of them kept what were then called country-stores. They had to purchase dry-goods, groceries, hardware, medicines, crockery, etc., etc. It was a great object with the jobbers to have one of their salesmen board at a large house for country merchants, so that they could induce them to come to their stores to trade. Most of the goods were shipped by sloops, bound



up the North river or the Sound; those for the South, on schooners and brigs to ports from whence they were taken into the interior. There were very few hotels, the principal ones being the City Hotel, which occupied the block in Broadway near Trinity church; the Pearl Street House, between Old and Coenties slips, and Bunker's, near the Bowling Green. These periodical seasons were active times, the bulk of the business being done in three months of spring and three months of fall. The winter and summer were comparatively idle. There was a limited district from which to draw customers, and as soon as the North river and the rivers and harbors of the Sound were closed by ice, Pearl street was almost as quiet as Sunday.

You will remember that New York was then a comparatively small city, with a population of less than 120,000. One fourth the present size of Chicago, it had extended very little above Canal street. Most of the dwellings were below Chambers, on the North river, but on the East river there were many up as far as Market and Rutgers streets. The most of the merchants and families of wealth lived in the lower part of the town, in Greenwich below Chambers, and on the cross streets west of Broadway from the Park to the Battery. Many merchants in Pearl street lived over their stores, and John, Fulton, Beekman, Gold, and Cliff were filled with private

residences. I was married fifty years ago in Cliff street near my present office. Then that good man, Dr. Milnor, preached in St. George's, corner of Beekman and Cliff streets, to crowded audiences. Stores now occupy the ground, but it is consoling to know that from the proceeds of the sale of that church two others have been erected. The most fashionable residences were, perhaps, around the Battery and up Broadway and Greenwich to Cortlandt. It is interesting and instructive to think of the noble merchants who occupied those dwellings, all of whom have passed away—such men as Robert Lenox, Stephen Whitney, James G. King, J. Phillips Phoenix, James Suydam, Cadwalader D. Colden, James De Peyster, Pierre Irving, Gideon Lee, the Howlands, Aspinwalls, and many others who have honored the name of New York merchants.

The churches were then all down town—the old “Wall street,” “Garden street” (now Exchange place), “Middle” and “North Dutch,” “Trinity” and “St. Paul's,” “Grace,” “Cedar street,” the old “Brick” (where now stands the *Times* Building), “Liberty,” which Thorburn so long occupied as a seed-store, and “Murray” and “Rutgers,”—then far up town. I remember when young Philip Melancthon Whelpley was pastor of the Wall street church, of which my father was then an elder. He was settled when only about twenty-one, was a most eloquent

man, but suffered from dyspepsia; he lived in Greenwich street, back of Trinity church. Some adventurous man had put up four small houses on White street, then just opened, near Broadway, and as Mr. Whelpley felt the need of exercise, and the rent was very low, he ventured to hire one of these, but the excitement in the congregation at the idea of their pastor living out of the city was so great that it came nigh losing him his place. Speaking of churches, I often have thought there was more of real worship when, in place of our present quartette, there was in most of the dissenting churches a precentor standing under the pulpit, to give the key with his pitch-pipe, and all the congregation united in the singing. The first Presbyterian church built north of Canal street was the "Broome street," standing between Elm and Centre. My father-in-law, Mr. Phelps, who was on the committee of Presbytery appointed to select a location, told me that at that time the entire triangle from Broome to Spring was for sale, and he advised the purchase of the whole, as the price was very low and he felt that the building of the church would add to the value, so that the sale of the other lots would pay the cost of the church. But the rest of the committee felt it was so far up town that there would be no chance of selling.

Fifty years ago I commenced housekeeping in

the upper part of the city, in Bleecker street, between Broadway and the Bowery; there were eight new two-story attic houses just finished, 23 by 40 feet, and three or four of us, young married people, took houses adjoining, and each paid \$300 a year rent, and when newly furnished we thought them very fine. Young business men could afford to marry in those days. I had the curiosity to call a short time since and ask the present occupant what rent he paid. He said the rent had been reduced, and he was now paying but \$1500. I told him I only inquired from curiosity, as, when the house was new, I paid just one fifth of that.

When the Bible House was to be removed from Nassau street, the committee, all but one, decided to go no further up than Grand street; the present site, at Ninth and Tenth streets, owned by Mr. Peter Stuyvesant, was then fenced in and rented as a pasture or for vegetables. Mr. Stuyvesant was at that time paying very heavy assessments for opening streets on his property, and, being himself interested in the Bible Society, offered the entire block for \$100,000 cash, which, by one of the committee, the late Anson G. Phelps, was considered a great bargain. Mr. Phelps could not for a long time induce his associates to agree with him, since they felt it was so far up town that it would be out of the way; but when informed that he should pur-

chase it himself, if they did not, they yielded, and we can all see the wisdom of the choice. The rents of the portion not required for their work now pay all expenses, salaries, etc., so that every dollar given to the Bible Society goes for furnishing the Bible and for nothing else.

You all have noticed that the City Hall is constructed on three sides of white marble, and on Chambers street of brown stone. Some thirty years ago there resided near me an aged gentleman of the old school, Mr. McComb, who was the architect of the City Hall, and who told me that in making the estimate of cost of the building they found that the difference between the marble and stone for the rear would be \$15,000. As it was so far up-town that but few would see the back part of the Hall, they decided to use the brown stone. In those days the city fathers were so far from the fashion of these days that they were calculating how they might economize in city expenditures.

Think of New York without gas! At that time the street lamps were few and far between, often filled with poor oil and badly trimmed. They looked on a dark night like so many lightning-bugs, and in winter would often go entirely out before morning. In 1825, the first gas-lights were introduced by the New York Gas Company, which had contracted to light below Canal street. In 1834,

the Manhattan Company obtained the contract to light above Canal street; we can now hardly conceive how our citizens could get on without gas, and yet it was much safer walking the streets then than now. Crime was not so rife, and a murder was a rare occurrence. The first murder I remember was committed by a tailor of the name of Johnson, living in William street near Beaver; he killed his wife, and the excitement of his arrest, trial, and hanging—which took place out of the city on a vacant lot east of Broadway, now a portion of White street—lasted for months. We seldom open our morning paper now without the record of a murder in some one of the drinking saloons.

There were no police in those days, but there were a few watchmen, who came on soon after dark and patrolled the streets till near daylight. Their rounds were so arranged that they made one each hour, and as the clocks struck they pounded with their clubs three times on the curb, calling out, for example, "Twelve o'clock, and all is well," in a very peculiar voice. They wore leathern caps such as the firemen now use.

Our streets were kept cleaner than now, since every one was responsible for a space in front of his building extending to the middle of the street, the public dirt-carts passing on regular days and carting away the dirt. The garbage-men with large carts

came around to collect from the tub or half-barrel placed in the area. I remember a very eccentric old man, who was full of fun, and in the season would dress himself up with the husks and tassels of the corn and with a fancy paper hat, and who rang his bell, keeping time to a peculiar song, greatly to the amusement of the boys. It was said that on one occasion a man passing cried out, "Why, old man, you take all sorts of trash in your cart." "Oh, yes," said he, "*jump in; jump in.*" There were then a special kind of street-cleaners, in the vast number of swine, owned by the poorer classes, that crowded some portions of the city, making travel dangerous. It was by many claimed that they ate up the garbage thrown into the streets in spite of law, and thus were to be tolerated.

The Sabbaths were for the most part very quiet, and but few vehicles were seen in the city. There were no public cries except those of the milkmen, who were mostly farmers from Long Island, and carried their milk in large tin cans suspended by a yoke from their shoulders. They generally served real milk, but it was sometimes said that they stopped to wash their cans at the corner-pumps. Although the Sabbath was almost free from disturbance by carriages, still, for fear that some one might be passing during worship, the churches had chains drawn across the streets on either side,

which were put up as soon as service commenced and taken down at its close. What would our riding, sporting, Sabbath-breaking citizens say to such obstructions if put up on Fifth or Madison avenues now?

The Sabbath-schools were then just introduced into the city, and but two or three at the time to which I refer, and these were designed only for the poor and neglected children. The children of church-goers were instructed at home in the catechism, and in many churches were expected to recite every Wednesday afternoon in the session-room to the pastor and elders.

Our wonderful system of public schools has all been developed since the time of which I speak.

The Battery was the great point of attraction as a cool and delightful promenade, and in the warm season was crowded every afternoon and evening; the grass was kept clean and green and the walks in perfect order; there was a building near the south end, of octagonal form, called the "Flag-staff," having an observatory in the top, and above it always waved the "national flag." In the summer and early fall a band of music in the evening enlivened the scene, and the grounds were crowded with the élite of the city; it was as polite and marked a compliment for a young lady to be invited by a gentleman to take a walk on the Battery as now to be in-



vited to a drive in the Park ; and on Saturdays the boys were allowed to play ball, etc., on the grass. Castle Garden was then a fort with its garrison ; and the guard were always to be seen walking their rounds, on the parapet, and before the gate leading from the Battery, across the draw-bridge, to the Fort.

The city was so compact that there were very few private carriages. I venture to say that there were not then twenty-five families that kept a two-horse carriage. In fact, there was very little use for one ; there were no pleasant drives out of the city ; the old Bloomingdale road was mostly used, but in summer it was very dusty, and there were no attractions. The old Boston road, where are now the Bowery and Third avenue, and the Albany road, which is now upper Broadway, were the only roads for pleasure travel, and were used by gentlemen who lived in the summer at their country houses. These were along the East river, from what is now Eighth street up to a point opposite Hell Gate, on the North river, and along what were then Bloomingdale and Greenwich, say from what is now Fourth street up to Eightieth street.

The contrasts between the City Post-office of my early days and the splendid building of to-day, and the amount of business *then* and *now*, give a vivid idea of the progress of the city and country. The

office then was in the dwelling of the Postmaster, General Theodorus Bailey, who, having been appointed in 1804, converted his lower floor into the Post-office, living above with his family. It was situated at the corner of William and Garden streets, now Exchange place; the two parlors were converted into the office; on Garden street there was a window for city delivery and in William street a vestibule of about 8 by 16 feet with 144 small boxes for letters. Not over half a dozen clerks were employed. This was still its position when I went into a store, and I well remember the fun we boys had while waiting for the office to open, which was not till about eight or nine o'clock A.M. We used to employ the time by crowding up the line, so that the lucky boy who first had got opposite the one small place of delivery could be pushed aside to make room for some other, who would soon have in turn to give way. Postage then was so high that the number of letters sent by mail was comparatively small: 12½ cents to Philadelphia, 18½ cents to Boston and 25 cents to New Orleans. It was the habit to send as far as possible by private hands, and when it became known that a friend was going by stage or sloop he was sure to be the carrier of many letters—the exchanges between the interior and the banks being mostly effected in the same way.

When Abraham Wakeman, in 1862, was Postmaster, there was living, at an advanced age, a man by the name of Dodd; this person, when General Bailey was Postmaster, made a contract with him to take the mails from the New York office to the Western and Southern stages that started and arrived at Hoboken and Jersey City. He stated that for three years he carried the mail-bags on his back and ferried them in his own little boat across the river; but they then grew heavy, and for some years afterward he took them in a small wheelbarrow to his boat. Now, contrast the Post-office and mails of those days with the present office and business. The reduction of postage to one uniform rate of one penny took place in Great Britain in 1840, and was followed by the United States adopting the present uniform rate of three cents, in 1851. Since then the amount of mail matter has vastly increased. By the kindness of Postmaster James I am able to state that the number of letters received and delivered daily is about one million, weighing about 90 tons. The number of foreign letters dispatched is about 175,000 weekly, weighing, say 25 tons, and there are received about 165,000, weighing very little less. Some idea may be formed of the business transacted at the stations in different parts of the city by comparing it with the

business done in other cities. I will only refer to five of our stations:

Station A receives and delivers daily 1000 more letters than the Detroit office.

Station D 5000 more than all Brooklyn.

“ F 1000 “ “ “ Washington.

“ G 4000 “ “ “ New Haven.

“ H 1000 “ “ “ Portland.

Station D now executes more delivery business than did the whole Post-office department of New York City in 1836. The number of persons of all kinds employed in the main office is 827, and in the different branch offices and carriers, 492. The mail wagon service is by contract, employing 33 wagons and 60 men, and making in all to the different railroads and steamboats and the city stations 184 trips daily. Contrast our present spacious Post-Office,—with its vast tonnage and its 4759 boxes, as against the 144 of my early remembrance,—with General Bailey's parlor and Dodd's back and wheelbarrow that carried the mail! The railroad postal system, by which letters are received and distributed at each station on our principal lines, by travelling post-offices, is one of the many new features which have marked the past few years.

In nothing, perhaps, has there been a more beneficial change than in the item of water. This formerly was supplied by public pumps at the cor-

ners of blocks far apart; the water was brackish and very hard and poor; there were some few springs in the upper part of the city, where wells had been sunk and pumps erected by individuals. This water was taken about the city in large casks, similar to those now used for sprinkling the streets, and painted in large letters on the end "Tea Water." It was sold at two cents a pail. Besides this, the Manhattan Company was chartered with banking privileges to supply the city with water by boring and pumping into tanks, from the ground near the upper end of Pearl street in Centre street. Thence wooden pipes were laid to many dwellings, but the water proved poor and in limited supply, and the company found the banking department better than the water, so that the logs soon decayed and were never renewed. For washing and all ordinary purposes, the main dependence was upon the cisterns supplied from the rain caught on the roofs, but in long droughts these would entirely fail, and then the street pumps were the only source of supply, and those could not be used with any comfort for the family washing.

I shall never forget one time, when there had been no rain for weeks, and our cistern (we were living near the Battery) was dry, as well as those of all our neighbors. My mother, visiting a friend quite up-town, near Fulton street, was complaining

that she had not a drop of soft water to wash fine muslins, and her friend offered to let her fill a demi-john from her cistern. My brother and myself made our mother very happy by bringing her the coveted vessel of water that evening. Well might our citizens hasten to the ballot-box, in 1835, to vote "Water" or "No Water" on the question of introducing the Croton; and now in its profuse enjoyment but few remember the old times when they were glad to get a pail of water for their tea at a cost of two cents. But I have sometimes almost sighed for the old brackish pumps which were used by the passing laborer to quench his thirst, and I remember that for years after their removal there was not a drop of water to be had by any thirsty man unless he went into a corner grocery. Even there he was tempted to drink liquor, because he was ashamed to ask for water without pay. Thanks to the efforts of some good men in New York and Brooklyn, there are now a few places where good water for man and beast can be had without money or price.

On the Fourth of July, 1842, the introduction of the Croton was celebrated by an imposing procession, and many who had doubts were fully satisfied when, at 12 o'clock, as the procession rounded the Park, the fountain was first opened and sent up a stream 50 feet, amid the shouts of the people. The

substantial and faithful construction of the aqueduct and the High Bridge by men who did not squander the people's money, has left us not even for a day in want of an abundance of water, and the work was so well done that it stands as a monument of their honest labor.

Wood was then almost the only fuel, though Liverpool coal was used in offices and parlors. Those who could afford it purchased their sloop-load of hickory and oak in the fall, and had it sawed and piled in the cellar for the winter. Hundreds of sloops from North river towns, and from Connecticut and Long Island, filled the slips on the North and East rivers, and at many of the street corners carmen stood with loads for sale.

I remember a story of this wood-burning. It was the habit of many families to have the servant-man saw and pile up the wood, and as a perquisite to give him the proceeds of the sale of ashes, which was then quite an item. Mr. Stephen B. Munn, living on Pearl near Maiden lane, whom some present well recollect, had a colored waiter to whom he had promised the ashes from a fine cargo of hickory, on condition that he should saw it up and have it nicely piled in the cellar. This done, Mr. Munn was aroused one night by a fearful roar in the chimney, and, rushing down to the kitchen, found the old negro asleep before a tremendous fire with the

wood piled far up the chimney-place. When asked what it meant, the old man replied, "Makee ashes, master! makee ashes." The poor old man, like many others, was anxious to make the most of his advantages without regard to his employer's. It was about this time that the anthracite fields of the Lehigh were discovered, and I shall not forget the time when my employers sent up a barrel of hard coal for trial. We made up a fire in the ordinary open grate, with kindlings, and it did not blaze; we poked it, but the more we poked the more it would not burn, until the Quaker's patience was exhausted and he condemned the stone-coal as well named but quite unfit for use.

There were no such things as stoves or furnaces for warming a house. It makes one almost shiver now to remember the cold halls and bedrooms of those days, or the attempt to warm a large store in a cold winter by a coal or wood fire, at the extreme end, which left the front as cold as a barn. How my feet and fingers have ached as I have stood at the desk of a bitter morning! What a change that same "stone-coal" has made in the comfort of our stores and dwellings! That little sample sent from Pennsylvania was the germ of a business that now employs two hundred millions of capital and twenty thousand men; that has a product of some twenty-five million of tons per annum, and has given an



entirely new position to our manufactures, which before were dependent on water-power. Without this coal factories never could have been established at important centres on our railroads and in the midst of our principal cities, nor have risen to such importance; without it our iron interest never could have attained such vast proportions, nor could our railroads and steamships transport passengers and freight at such cheap rates, and our houses and other buildings be made so comfortable.

Brooklyn then was an inconsiderable village, containing in 1823 but 7000 inhabitants, and in 1835 but 24,310. The small rowboats, which till 1811 had been the only ferry across the river, were interfered with by the introduction of the first ferryboats, but until 1822 the latter consisted of one small steamer and one horse-boat. It was not till 1824 that steam ferryboats of any considerable size were introduced, and the accommodations for Brooklyn continued on a small and inconvenient scale till 1836, when public meetings were held, demanding greater facilities, and from that time larger and better boats were used in the transit. There was only one ferry across the East river, but at the foot of Wall street, Coenties slip, and Whitehall, there were numbers of small rowboats, bearing a variety of fancy names and handsomely painted, and, when a person wanted to go over, a crowd

of oarsmen would gather, each offering him the best boat. The fare across was ten cents. The Jersey City ferriage before 1812 was provided simply by rowboats, and by scows which floated horses and carriages across in pleasant weather. In 1812 and 1813, Fulton constructed for the associate ferries two boats propelled by steam, the beginning of those extensive accommodations by which many thousands now cross in a day. The first boat with steam was put on the Hoboken Ferry in 1812; it was so small that often in a strong tide it had to stop in the river to get up steam enough to make the transit. In 1825 a new lease was given to F. B. Ogden, Cadwalader D. Colden, and Samuel Swartout, who were required to put on two larger boats; before this the farmers from New Jersey had great difficulty in bringing their produce to the New York market, and many refused to come across the meadows, the corduroy road being so bad that they would go no farther than Newark. Many of our marketmen went regularly to that city as buyers; and there was quite an opposition in Newark to the granting of the ferry rights, as they saw it would remove the sale of farm-truck to New York. The new lease was for two good boats; the annual rent was \$595, with the privilege of another ferry at the foot of Spring street—the rent for the latter to be, the first four years, *one cent a*

*year*; for the next five years, fifty dollars; and for still another five, at the rate of two hundred dollars per annum. Compare these small beginnings with the value of these ferries at the present time, when more persons and vehicles cross the Fulton and Jersey ferries in an hour, at morning or at evening, than crossed in a whole month in the year 1820.

The monopoly granted to Fulton and Livingston was set aside about 1820 by the Supreme Court, and the use of steam was thrown open to public competition. Then commenced a new era: boats were soon started on the Sound, the first of these being the "Fulton," Captain Bunker, and the "Connecticut," Captain Comstock. I remember a trip to New London which I made soon after they were started. The two formed a daily line; the "Fulton" left New York early in the morning, arriving in New Haven about 4 o'clock; then all the passengers and freight were put aboard the "Connecticut" for New London, the "Fulton" returning in the evening to New York. This gave time for the boilers to cool off and the machinery to rest, as it was not thought safe to run one boat so far as New London without stopping. Compare these with the thousands of steamboats now running along our coasts, on all navigable rivers, and on our lakes. The propeller, more lately introduced, has added vastly to the cheapening of transportation. A new

life was infused, and the people began to demand new openings for trade. The Erie canal, which, after much opposition, had been commenced in 1817, was gaining favor; the period for its opening was looked for with great interest, and its final completion was celebrated by a grand public demonstration.

A large number of boats had been loaded in Buffalo, and left there on the 25th of October, 1825. On the 4th of November a fleet of steamers, all gayly dressed and filled with citizens, met them on their arrival. They were towed from Albany to the city by the new steamer, "Chancellor Livingston," having on board De Witt Clinton and many distinguished citizens from Albany, Troy, and the West. It was a proud day for New York; all the ships were trimmed with flags; the harbor was filled with large and small steamboats, and hundreds of small sailing craft. I was, fortunately, on the steamer which carried those who were to take part in the exercises down the lower bay. De Witt Clinton, at the close of an address, poured a keg of water from Lake Erie into the Atlantic. Dr. Samuel Mitchell had secured bottles of water from the several lakes and from the Mediterranean, and, after a characteristic speech, he mingled them all with the waters of the ocean, to signify that by this great public improvement the products of the

West were to be carried to all parts of the world, and that their products, returned by the same channel, would be scattered throughout our own land.

Such was the commencement of that spirit of public improvements which was destined to change the whole face of trade and commerce.

The first regular line of packet ships, known as the "Black Ball Line," was started in 1817, to sail on the first of each month. It was soon followed by others, which in a few years made a regular weekly line, and gave a new impetus to our commerce, so that our trade with England rapidly increased.

Let me here revert again to the very limited facilities for travel and trade which existed previous to 1825. The sloops and steamers on our lakes, rivers, and Sound, the small brigs and ships which ran to our Southern ports, with the stage-coach to all parts of the interior, were the extent of the facilities, and in the winter we were almost entirely shut in. Think of one stage a day, which started from No. 1 Cortlandt street for Albany, and one for Boston! Who that ever made that trip in winter-time will forget the old agent, Thomas Whitfield, at No. 1 Cortlandt street? He would book you three days in advance for a seat, and if perchance there were applications for more than the coach would hold, and yet not enough to warrant an extra, one must

wait another day for a seat. Then what a time in packing on the baggage and seating the passengers! Why, it was as exciting as the sailing of a steamer with its one hundred and fifty cabin passengers and its crowd for the steerage. Think now of the number of large steamers, five or six frequently sailing in a day, and each often taking at a single trip many more passengers than fifty years ago sailed in a twelvemonth,—steamers of 3000 to 5000 tons, as compared with packets of 500 to 600 tons! To cross the Atlantic then by steam would have seemed impossible; now, the passage is but a pleasure-trip, and hundreds go where one went then.

It was a great undertaking in those days to come from the West to the city at any season, particularly in the winter, and many country merchants came but once a year. Those from the line of the Ohio river took stage at Wheeling, and came over the mountains to Baltimore, thence to the city by schooners or stage. The only wonder is that country merchants came as often and as far as they did, and that their goods could be transported by teams over so long distances and pay a profit above expenses. Passengers for Philadelphia, in winter, would cross to Jersey City the evening before, sleep at a tavern, and start in the morning by stage, reaching the Quaker City in a day and a night. At a later period they went by steamer

to Amboy, and thence by stage. Who, that now witnesses the thousands daily crossing Cortlandt Street Ferry to take the cars, can realize that sixty years ago two stages would carry all the passengers that went to Newark or vicinity. The emigrant who went West to settle had to go by wagon. I vividly recall the occasion when two of my uncles came with their families from Connecticut, on their way to the far West, stopping at my father's house. It was arranged that, as they might never see each other again, the relatives, with several ministers, should spend the afternoon previous to their starting as a season of special prayer. The travellers left the next day by sloop for Albany, whence teams were to take them to their far Western home, which was at Bloomfield, just beyond Utica! Why, last fall I took my tea at my house and my breakfast next morning beyond that distant point.

The opening of the Erie canal gave a new impulse to travel. The first railroad of the State was from Albany to Schenectady, with an inclined plane at either end; this was built in order that passengers might sooner reach the canal, as from Albany to Schenectady the distance was much greater, and there were numerous locks. It was really pleasant to travel by canal, as from Schenectady to Utica there was hardly a lock (after passing Seneca Falls), and there were but few more on the long reach

from Utica to Syracuse. There were rival lines of packet boats, some very handsomely fitted up; their four horses were matched teams of either black, bay, or gray, and the best that could be found; the captains and owners took great pride in their teams, which were beautifully harnessed, and kept up a speed of four to five miles an hour. There was no motion felt, and when in the cabin it was hard to tell if the boat was under way. In pleasant weather most of the passengers sat on the trunks on deck, and had a fine view of the country. Some caution was required, however. When one happened to be standing, and the driver gave a snap of his whip, the horses would give the boat a sudden start, which might throw a passenger off. Again, as the bridges, which on almost every farm crossed the canal, were then very low, one must stoop as he passed or be knocked overboard, and the continued cry of the helmsman was, "Low bridge!" "Heads down!" which kept one on the lookout. The fare was so much a mile "and *found*," and the boats provided a very comfortable table. At night berths were made up on either side, each just wide enough to hold an ordinary person; they were three high, and supported by cords from the ceiling. Lots being drawn for the numbers, it often created much merriment to see a very large man trying to get into an upper berth, while the holder of the



number for the under one looked on with fear lest the cords might break and let his companion down. The ladies' cabin was in the front of the boat, separated by long curtains, which were thrown open in the daytime.

I now propose to refer to a period somewhat later and to me more interesting. In May, 1827, I commenced at 213 Pearl street the wholesale dry goods business. A retired Connecticut merchant, with whom I had done business most of the time while a clerk, had a son just graduated from Yale whom he was anxious to place in New York, and, having heard that I was intending to commence for myself, proposed a co-partnership with his son. He offered to furnish an amount of capital which, with the small sum I had (mostly savings from my salary), would make, for those days, a respectable beginning, and furthermore promised to endorse for us to any reasonable amount. There are few events in a man's life more important than that which introduces him into active business on his own account, and as my partner had no experience, I felt the responsibility the more. Here I will venture to relate an incident, as I think it may be of service to some of my young friends who are looking forward to mercantile life. A few weeks after we started, and when our stock of goods was small, three young men stepped into the store, each having two large tin trunks which he

carried in his hands, aided by a large strap over the shoulders. I saw at once they were Connecticut peddlers, for I had often dealt with such when a clerk. They were attracted by some article in the window. After giving them its price, and while they set down their loads to rest and talk, I said pleasantly, "I see you are, like myself, just starting in business. Now, let me make you a proposition: there is plenty of room in our store; each of you take one of these pigeon-holes under the shelves, put your trunks there in place of carrying them around while you are picking up your goods, and just order all you buy to be sent here. We will take charge of your purchases, pack and ship them, and you can come here and examine your bills, write letters, and do as you like, whether you buy a dollar of us or not. I want to make at least a show of doing business, and it will really be an advantage to us as well as a convenience to you." They were pleased with the offer, accepted it at once, and left in search of such things as they wanted. My young partner waited till they got out, and then, with considerable excitement and wounded pride, said, "Well, are those what you call customers?" I said, "Yes, you know that tall oaks from little acorns grow. We shall see by and by what they will make." Suffice it to say, that for the six years I remained in the dry-goods business, they were among my most attached customers. They were all respect-

able young men, not afraid of work, nor ashamed of small beginnings. They are all living. One has been president of a New England bank for more than twenty years; his brother, years after, moved to one of the large towns of Ohio, went into business, and has grown to be the man of the place, associated with the railroads and public improvements of the State; the other, who was from a manufacturing town in Connecticut, has long been connected with the large mills of the place, a man, unusually respected. These are examples of hundreds of our most successful and honored citizens, who have begun with little or nothing, but by industry, economy, and prudence, have risen to the highest positions in our city and country. If the history of our citizens of wealth were written, we should find that full three fourths had risen from comparatively small beginnings to their present position.

I call to mind an old man from Wheeling, Virginia, who, though wealthy, still dressed as he did when a travelling peddler; he was a very large buyer, and his credit was beyond doubt; he had a number of wagons peddling all over the West, and made Wheeling his headquarters. I had secured the confidence of this man and sold him large quantities of goods, but my partner thought it rather degrading to have so rough a man about the store.

If one would be a good salesman he must be all

things to all men ; and here permit me to say to my young friends, that open, frank, upright dealing with customers is the way to secure their confidence and trade.

I sometimes almost desire those days back again, for then young men had opportunities that cannot be enjoyed by those of this day ; then business of all kinds was conducted on moderate capital, and the number of merchants doing business on their own account, in proportion to the amount of business done, was far greater than now, and particularly so in the dry-goods and hardware trades. Then young men, if of undoubted character, starting with a very moderate capital, could command a fair credit, and, with very light rents and general expenses, could grow year by year into a larger and better business. If economical, they could afford to marry and begin housekeeping with fair prospect of success. Now business is in comparatively few hands, with large capital and many clerks, with sales every month, yes, even every week, amounting to what very few then reached in a year.

The time came when new channels of communication with the great West began to be discussed, and many enterprises were started. The West had been tapped by the Erie canal ; the lakes were thus united to the Atlantic and began to pour their treasures into New York, and business of all kinds

rapidly increased. As the canal-boats came in at the foot of Broad street and Coenties slip, and most of the goods for the West were shipped by them, the merchants began to move from upper Pearl street, and below Wall street the rents advanced, and from thence to Coenties slip the largest Western trade was conducted. About this time the lines of tow-boats were established between Albany and New York.

In nothing is the change more marked than between *the currency* used during my early business life and that now in circulation. General Jackson had put his foot on the United States Bank, and we had nothing but banks chartered by the different States. Many of these were owned and controlled by individuals, the system being different in almost every State. Some had careful restrictions, others hardly any. Banks were chartered with capitals as small as \$50,000, with no limit to their issues; and their great object was to get a location so far from convenient access that their circulation would not easily find its way back. Most of the country banks of respectability had agencies where they redeemed their bills at rates varying, according to location, from one eighth to three quarters or one per cent; but the banks in other and distant States had no regular place of redemption, and their issues were purchased by brokers at all rates, from three

quarters to five per cent. The notes of many of the banks far South and West were sold at five to ten per cent discount, and firms doing a large business had to keep one or more clerks busy in turning uncurrent bills into funds that could be here deposited. After the great depression that followed the financial troubles of 1837, many firms doing business South and West were compelled to settle with their customers by taking, *as money*, the currency that was passing in those sections, issued by banks which had suspended specie payment and yet kept up a large paper circulation, which could only be converted at a very heavy discount into money current in New York. A person starting from New Orleans for New York would have to change his currency several times in order to get funds that would be taken for fares or hotel bills. The country was flooded with all kinds of bank-bills, *good, bad, and indifferent*, and they became a perfect nuisance. *Now* we have the best paper currency the country ever had; we never think of looking at bank-bills, for, as to the National banks, we know they are all secured by United States bonds. No matter if a bank fails, its notes are as good as gold. At present the greenbacks are equally good, but as they have no actual specie basis they should be withdrawn or deprived of their legal-tender quality; otherwise they may, during a sudden turn in our

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foreign exchanges, expose us to disaster that would spread ruin over the land and result in another suspension of specie payment.

In May, 1832, a sad event took place which changed my business life; the new store just finished by my father-in-law, Mr. Phelps, at the corner of Fulton and Cliff streets, suddenly gave way from the foundation, and the immense building fell in an instant, crushing to death seven persons—among them two bookkeepers and a confidential salesman. Thus afflicted and deprived of valued help, Mr. Phelps turned to me, and I sold out my interest to my partner and retired from the dry-goods business after a successful and pleasant connection with it for fourteen years; but I have ever felt a deep interest in it as my first love. I have been in my present business forty-five years, during which time I have witnessed remarkable changes and growth in this city and the entire country. A brief reference to them will suffice for the present occasion.

In December, 1835, the *great* fire occurred, and those who were aiding to stay its progress can never forget it. The night was intensely cold, the thermometer lower than for many years, the wind high, and the fire—commencing in some old buildings—spread rapidly; the water froze in the hose and the old hand-engines were almost useless; the result was the destruction of 648 buildings, including the

Exchange and many banks in Wall street, and the laying prostrate of all that part of the city from Water street, up Wall, to Broad street, including South William, Exchange, Pearl, Water, South and Front, and property estimated at \$28,000,000. Every insurance company in the city was supposed to be ruined, except one or two up-town, and all the rest of the city was left without insurance. Business was suspended; none knew where they stood or who could be trusted; but the best of feeling prevailed, and soon the elasticity of our people began to manifest itself, and the old foundations were removed, and new blocks of buildings sprung up like magic. Before the close of 1836 nearly all was rebuilt, and the streets looked better than before the fire. However, from that date the dry-goods business left Pearl street, was driven out of the burnt district never to return, and since has been gradually working up-town, and now has no one street to mark its locality.

A stirring and brave reply was made to me by one of our old dry-goods importers, Mr. James Lee, who in a single night had lost much of the hard earnings of years. As I saw him, covered with dirt, the day after the fire, trying with a gang of men to dig out his iron safe, I said, "Well, this is very hard." "Yes," said he, straightening himself up,



"but, Dodge, thank God, he has left me my wife and children, and these hands can support them!" and he lived and died one of the time-honored merchants, and is remembered by many persons present.

Strange as it may seem, 1836 was a year of vast trade and expansion. All kinds of new projects for securing hasty fortunes were introduced, and before the capital of the city had recovered from the losses of the fire, its credit was extended and speculation ran wild; everything was advancing, and the people were intoxicated with their many schemes, but in 1837 the bubble burst and the wide-spread ruin followed which has made that year one of the long-to-be-remembered epochs of New York.

A tabular view of the imports and exports from the United States, and from this city alone, during the decades of the past sixty years, will give some idea of their rapid growth.

In 1821 the total imports

into the United States,

including specie, were. \$62,000,000. New York, \$24,000,000

In 1830.	Total.....	70,000,000.	"	30,000,000
" 1840.	" .....	107,000,000.	"	41,000,000
" 1850.	" .....	183,000,000.	"	112,000,000
" 1860.	" .....	363,000,000.	"	248,000,000
" 1870.	" .....	461,000,000.	"	315,000,000
" 1879.	" .....	465,000,000.	"	302,000,000

In 1821 our total ex-

ports were.....	\$65,000,000.	New York,	\$13,000,000
In 1830.....	74,000,000.	“	20,000,000
“ 1840.....	137,000,000.	“	34,000,000
“ 1850.....	154,000,000.	“	53,000,000
“ 1860.....	399,000,000.	“	146,000,000
“ 1870.....	498,000,000.	“	233,000,000
“ 1879.....	726,000,000.	“	328,000,000

We thus see that our imports have risen, from 62,000,000 in 1821, to 465,000,000 in 1879; and our exports from 65,000,000 to 726,000,000 during the same period.

In the spring of 1837 an event happened which was to inaugurate an entire change in the mode of ocean communication. The little steamer “Sirius” suddenly made its appearance in our harbor from Liverpool, the first which had ever crossed the Atlantic, and thousands of our citizens crowded to see her; she was soon followed by the “Great Western,” Captain Mathews, which became so popular and successful. Many still doubted if steamships could be made safe or run profitably, but the almost daily arrival and sailing of the splendid steamers of this day, from and to all the ports of Europe, and the voyages along our entire coast, have long since settled the question. In my early business life, it was a very uncommon thing for persons to cross the ocean, except for business, and it was still less common for those from the other side to

visit us. There are more crossing now in a week than then sailed in a year.

The past forty years have witnessed the extension of our railroads in every direction, and the vast sums of money invested in their construction have been with few exceptions justified by the increase of values all along their lines, and the rapid growth of our great West. Our city has by these facilities become the chief centre of trade, commerce, and finance. Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago are now practically nearer than Philadelphia, Albany, or Boston were when I began as a clerk in 1818. There was not a mile of railroad constructed when I commenced business in 1827; the first experiment was the twenty-three miles from Albany to Schenectady, opened in 1830. In 1840, there were 2800 miles of railway; in 1850, 9000; in 1860, 30,000; in 1870, 53,000; and by the close of 1880 there will be nearly 100,000 miles.

I was familiar with the difficulties connected with the early construction of the Erie road, having been in its direction for twelve years. The great effort was to secure subscriptions for three millions to the stock, in which case the State would take a second mortgage for the three millions it had advanced. The road then was finished only to Goshen, Orange County. Public meetings were held, committees of merchants went from store to store for subscriptions,

for the road at that time was in the hands of the merchants, who felt that a direct connection with the lakes was absolutely necessary to secure to New York the business of the growing West. When at last it was completed to Dunkirk, by the persevering energy of Benjamin Loder and his associate merchants, the opening was celebrated by a large party of citizens and invited guests, among whom were the Vice-President of the United States, and Members of the Cabinet, and many distinguished members of the Senate and House of Representatives—statesmen like Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. It was an event of vast interest to the city and the West. The road was completed for a sum which, compared with its present cost, seems to have been impossible. What our city and country owe to the vast railroad extension and the expenditure of nearly five thousand millions, it is as impossible to estimate as to conceive of the influence of the 200,000 miles which I doubt not will be constructed before the close of the century.

The telegraph, uniting all parts of our own country, and by ocean cable reaching the business centres of the world, has so completely changed the course of commercial transactions, that the old style of doing business is "played out," as the boys say; for not only are goods ordered from all parts of our own country by wire, but also from Europe, and

an agreement to pay a certain sum in London is made here and consummated in a few hours through our bankers, and the money actually paid over in London or Paris on the same day. One of our old merchants died last month in a small interior town in Switzerland, at 10 o'clock in the morning, and before night his death was announced in our evening journals.

The newspapers would now be considered very stale if they did not contain quotations of the markets in all the principal cities of Europe for the same day. And how truly marvellous the advance in number and circulation of our various newspapers and periodicals! What a change in printing-presses, paper, and type! We used to have Lang's *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, the *Evening Post*, and *Commercial Advertiser*. Consider the present number and variety of daily papers, employing an army of editors and reporters; the variety of our weekly, monthly, and quarterly periodicals, of every style and quality, which have been the outgrowth of the past fifty years.

Looking back, we shall find that almost all the charitable and religious societies, so vast in number and varied in purpose, which are now a blessing and honor to our cities, have had their beginning within the past half century.

During the same period, our public schools have

come to occupy a most prominent position, and are exerting a great influence. Having been established in a small way, to secure a common education for those unable to send their children to private schools, they now are popular institutions, where the children of all classes can obtain at public expense a superior education. The advance has been so great as to induce a growing feeling that, while the State should secure to all a good common education, there is no propriety in taxing the public to give such costly and higher advantages as now are furnished. During the past thirty years there has been expended for the maintenance of our public schools in this State the sum of \$193,447,000.

As I now look back to my connection with Pearl street, and think of those who then were the wholesale merchants, occupying that street from Coenties slip almost to Chatham street, and see that, with the exception of the names of Halsted, Haines & Co., and Jaffray & Co., all have either retired from business or passed away, it seems like a dream. I have confined my references chiefly to Pearl street; but go back a half century and call to mind the men who then were the merchants of New York, and who gave it the influence of their high and noble example—such men as the Griswolds, Howlands, Grinnells, Aspinwalls, Sturgis, Amars, Gideon Lee, Sheppard Knapp, the Hones, Stephen Whit-

ney, James G. King, Phoenix, and hundreds of others. These now are mostly gone from us; they occupy the narrow places of that city of the dead which had its foundation in 1838, and whose silent tenantry is now more numerous than was the whole population of New York when I commenced business.

The omnibuses were first introduced by Asa Hall for the accommodation of the residents of what was then Greenwich village. His stages ran each hour. The Broadway line of A. Brower started from the corner of Houston street, then quite up-town. Then came the street railways, now running to all parts of this city and Brooklyn; and now we have the Elevated Road, which is destined to make greater changes than the most sanguine imagination can anticipate.

The growth of New York and Brooklyn meanwhile has been remarkable. When I commenced as a clerk, New York had a population of less than 120,000, and Brooklyn was a mere town; now they are virtually one and contain not less than 1,700,000 souls, while the surrounding country finds homes for many thousands more who do business in the city. The wonderful changes in the value of real estate have recently been made apparent by a notice of the death of Mr. James Lenox. His large estate resulted principally from a purchase made by his

father in 1818, the year I entered a store. He bought for some \$6000 thirty acres of land where now stand the Library and Hospital, near Seventy-seventh street. The same thirty acres would now be worth ten millions.

The mind staggers in the attempt to predict what this city shall be as the mighty empire moves on toward its prospective destiny. The day is rapidly approaching when the two cities will be made virtually one by the completion of the suspension bridge. It will be followed by others crossing at Blackwell's Island and Harlem; these, with the elevated railroads, will swiftly build up the distant portions of the two cities. The influences of the vast chain of railroads uniting our city with all portions of the country—and of the canal enlarged and operated by steam power, as none can doubt it will be, uniting us with the Welland canal, now near completion, that is to join the great chain of lakes with the St. Lawrence, and with the canal entering Lake Superior enlarged to the same capacity\*—these influences make it almost sure that the future growth of New York will be equal to the most ardent expectations of those who venture to predict what the next half century will accomplish. Vast as are now

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\* By this system propellers of 500 tons will be able to start from Chicago and Duluth and reach our canal at Oswego.



the surplus products of the West and South, what will they be fifty years hence, when the amount of unoccupied land shall have been largely put under cultivation, and our exports, which are now the wonder of the world, shall have increased in proportion? The improvements in question will afford the West, by aid of her local railroads, a chance to move her products at such rates as to give value to these vast plains never yet dreamed of, and will add a new impetus to the growth of our own city, such as the Erie canal and railroad have given hitherto. No one can take a map of the United States and carefully examine our chain of inland seas, embracing sixteen hundred miles of continued water communication, without the reflection that a wise Providence designed them to be the outlet of the greatest productive section of our country.

I might refer to the influence on the growth and prosperity of our cities resulting from the completion of the four great lines of railroads to the Pacific. Connected, as these will be, by lines of steamers with all the East, they will secure to us a position among the commercial cities of the world which we never otherwise could have obtained. They will also develop the mineral resources of the interior of our continent by the cheap transit of men, machinery, and food, so that I venture to predict that, in less than twenty years, the annual

product of our gold and silver mines will reach \$300,000,000. With such an amount added to our present supply, who can attempt to predict the future of this country? But I will not venture farther on this interesting theme.

The half century has wrought an equally suggestive change in the department of agriculture. Think of the old plough, hoe, rake, scythe, sickle, and pitchfork; how little could they now do in planting and harvesting the vast crops of the West! The invention of the cultivator, mower, reaper, and thresher, worked by steam and horse-power, have given value to the extended plains of the West, and enabled us to produce food for ourselves, and also to supply the demands of Europe. These implements have added untold wealth to the producers, have given activity to our railroads, lakes, and canals, and have been, in fact, the true foundation of our national prosperity.

Those who have been identified with the commercial history of our cities, during the past half century, are fast passing away; we are to commit to other hands, under God, the future of these cities and the influence they are to exert on the nation. We have lived amid eventful times, and you, my young friends, enter on your life-work under many advantages. I have strong faith that the South will soon be restored to her proper position among her

sister sections, and, freed from the curse of slavery, will be more prosperous than ever. I believe that our entire country will go on in the future, as in the past, the wonder and attraction of the old world.

But, while the general prospect is so bright, there are some things which lead the Christian patriot to fear, as he looks to the future of our country, we are still to test the problem of our republican form of government with a nation of one hundred millions, extending from ocean to ocean. We all feel that the real security, under God, is in the virtue and intelligence of the people. Our rapid growth in population and wealth, the ambition of our citizens to become suddenly rich—the great variety of incorporated companies, for every conceivable object, pressing their stocks on the market—the immense power of capital invested in our railways and the reckless mode of manipulating shares—all these have engendered a spirit of speculation most dangerous to regular business. The fearful increase of defalcations has tended to weaken that principle of mercantile honor which has heretofore been the pride of our city and country.

While I appreciate, as fully as any one, the influence of our railroads in the growth of our public interests, and am strongly impressed with the feeling that our nation is to be bound together by these iron rails as it never could have been in any other way,

yet there are many dangers I can see to our permanent prosperity which may result from growing necessities and power. Feeling as I do that the Sabbath was made by God for man's physical rest, as well as for his spiritual benefit, I cannot witness its increasing desecration by our railroads without profound apprehension. The plea of necessity, which once was urged for carrying the mail, is now extended to the passenger and fast-freight trains, and in some sections is the plea for running all trains, and for keeping machine-shops and depots in full operation. This, in addition to the endeavor of many of our foreign population to transfer their Continental Sabbath to their new home, and freely to traffic in alcoholic poison—filling our prisons and almshouses, that they may fill their own pockets—is fast undermining the popular reverence and respect for the day which has done so much to make our country what it is. If virtue and intelligence are the corner-stones of our Republic, we have much to fear as we think of the future.

As you would aid in the prosperity and perpetuity of our city and country, let me urge you to maintain a high standard of mercantile honor, to watch the men who manage our great public improvements, and to see that the masses are educated. Watch the demands of those who, coming from other countries, know little of our free institutions and are often used by politicians to further selfish

designs, and who cannot understand at once what is necessary to perpetuate free institutions. We open our arms wide and invite all nations to come and share with us this vast public domain—virtually giving them the land they cultivate, and, after a very short residence, all the privileges that we ourselves enjoy. But we are now beginning to find that they insist on bringing with them the peculiar habits and customs of their native lands, and demanding their free exercise *here*, even at the expense of what we esteem vital to our highest good as a nation.

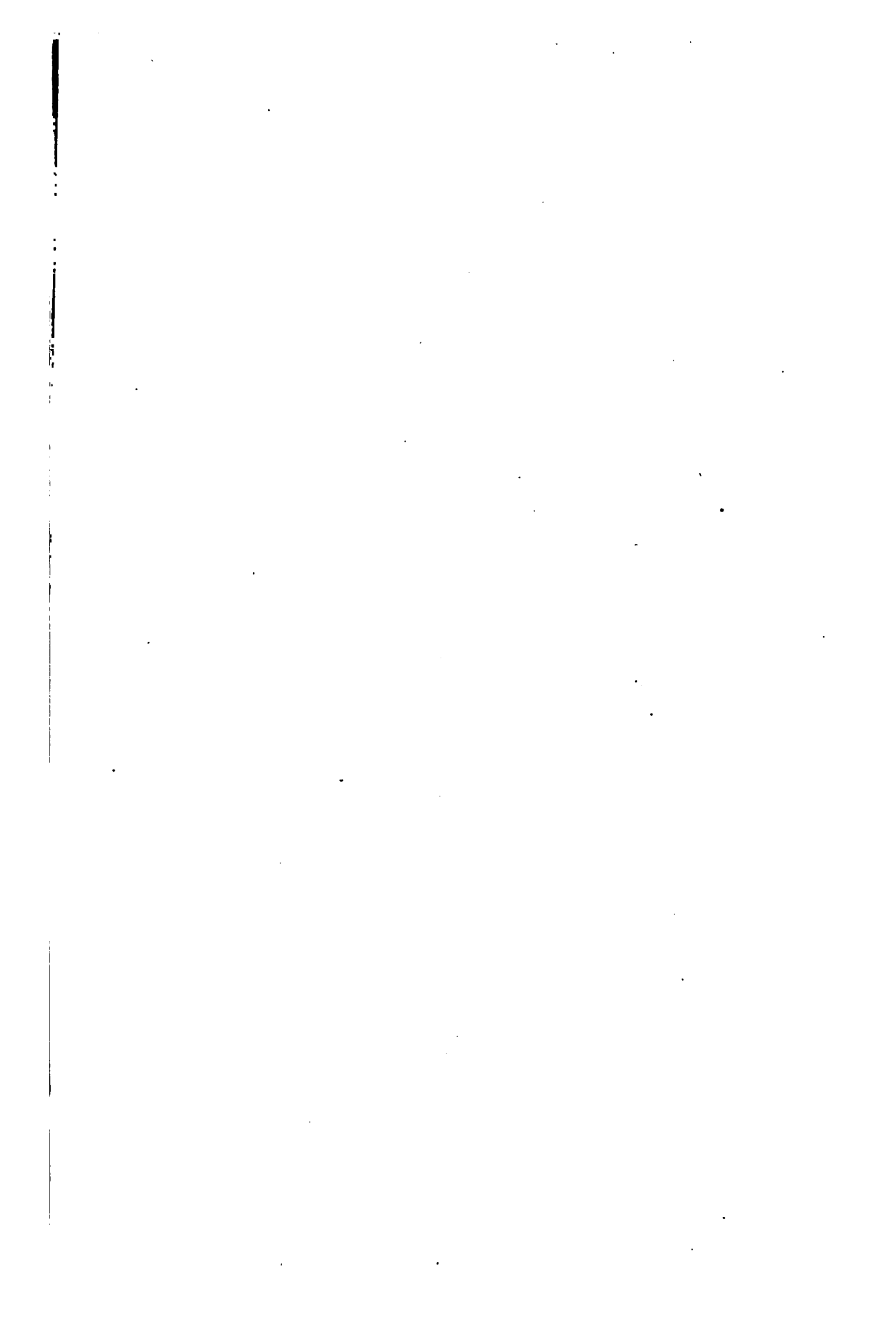
In conclusion, permit me to say that, as I think of my early business life, I am impressed with the fact that those young men who were then known as industrious, high-minded youth, conscientious in the discharge of their duties, were those who succeeded in business on their own account; while many, who had better opportunities, failed because they would indulge in pleasures which not only impaired confidence, but wasted what might have aided them in commencing for themselves.

All young men should aim to save something each year, even at the expense of a limited wardrobe and many little things which they think necessities. If there were none but young men here, I would say that from the first year when I entered a store, with a salary of \$50, to my last year—when

as a salesman I received for those days very large pay—I never failed to save a portion; and when I started in business *that sum and my experience were all my capital.*

I am deeply interested in the Young Men's Christian Association of our city. It is just what the times demand, and will be the means of giving a new and bright future to many who but for its influence would fail for this world and the next. I never can forget the "Young Men's City Bible Society," which was organized when I was about eighteen, and with which I was connected for many years. It was composed of several hundreds who were mostly clerks, and it has been pleasant to think how many of them became our successful merchants. A few of them remain, and are to-day among the most useful, active Christian men of our two cities and our country, and fill some of the highest positions of trust and honor. I would like to speak of some of them, if it were proper, for their names are as household words among us. God grant that those who may be permitted to live, and to speak of our city and country when another fifty years shall have passed, may have as strong impressions of His wonderful providence manifested to us as a nation, in perpetuating our religious and civil privileges, as those of us who look back on the period in which He has permitted us to live!







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